

A "free" press is crucial to our democracy and while everyone is entitled to their right to free speech, Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to require their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary just days before the November election is a perversion of this right and a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Corporations that use the public airwaves free of charge are obligated by law to serve the public interest. But Sinclair Broadcasting controls a substantial chunk of the "public" airwaves, and, apparently they have decided that the public will benefit by getting more of what's good for the corporate bottom line. What the public truly ends up with is less of what our democracy needs - diversity and freedom. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that the people of this country see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about what's happening in their community, how they can get involved and other local issues that matter both at home and regionally.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them by permitting larger monopolies. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.